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Three Main Points
by Bob Avakian
Chairman of the RCP, USA

What do we in the Revolutionary Communist Party want people to learn from all that is exposed and revealed in this newspaper? Mainly, three things:

1) The whole system we now live under is based on exploitation—here and all over the world. It is completely worthless and no basic change for the better can come about until this system is overthrown.

2) Many different groups will protest and rebel against things this system does, and these protests and rebellions should be supported and strengthened. Yet it is only those with nothing to lose but their chains who can be the backbone of a struggle to actually overthrow this system and create a new system that will put an end to exploitation and help pave the way to a whole new world.

3) Such a revolutionary struggle is possible. There is a political Party that can lead such a struggle: a political Party that speaks and acts for those with nothing to lose but their chains: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

This Party has the vision, the program, the leadership, and the organizational principles to unite those who must be united and enable them to do what must be done. There is a challenge for all those who would like to see such a revolution; those with a burning desire to see a drastic change for the better all those who dare to dream and to act to bring about a completely new and better world: Support this Party, join this Party, spread its message and its organized strength, and prepare the ground for a revolutionary rising that has a solid basis and a real chance of winning.
Elections 1994: NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

What's REALLY Wrong with America?

The system's election season looked like the night of the living dead. Corporations and millionaires spent over $5 billion buying candidates and financing a nasty TV lightening of "attack ads." Sections of the population were whipped up to vote by a constant drumbeat of scapegoating—blaming the decay of society on the poor, on Black inner-city youth, on the immigrants, on "violent criminals," and on this country's few raggedy welfare programs.

When this process ended, on November 8, the system coughed up a change in the government. Both houses of Congress now have Republican majorities. Most of the country's states now have Republican governors. Most of the large states now have Republican-controlled legislatures. In California, the anti-immigration Proposition 187 became law.

Overnight, President Clinton seemed weakened—exposed by the new Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. Playing "interview with a vampire" on endless TV news shows, Gingrich offers a mix of old-style Reaganism and new-style technobabble which he calls "conservative futurism." The time has come, he says, to bury the "vampire" on endless TV news.

Among some progressive people who welcomed the Clinton presidency, there is fear and depression. They had hoped that new social programs like universal health care would be passed and that abortion rights would be protected by federal agencies. Now, after two years of dilution, the problem is not just to see a new wave of right-wing ideologues dominate Congress.

In one sense the election was just a case of one representative of the ruling class replacing another. Changes happen in the slaveowner's mansion—but the real problem is the whole slavery system, not who's the overseer of the day. At the same time, when the media is talking about a "sweeping rightwing mandate" for dismantling the welfare state, the capital/impertalist ruling class is clearly up to something major.

A New Face of the Enemy

As soon as the election was over, the media claimed that the voters had given Republicans a sweeping "mandate" for "radical change." Republicans announced they would "cut government" and "inCREASE" freedom.

This "anti-government" rhetoric is just doubletalk—since the Republicans are clearly determined to greatly increase the powers of the state: They intend to finance (and fill) more prisons, step up government execution of prisoners, finance a huge military, and militarize the Mexico/U.S. border. There is no talk of a "pale-blue" forsaking federally funded doctors from mentioning abortion. And at least ten more state legislatures seem poised to pass laws to further restrict women's reproductive rights.

In California, the re-elected Republican governor campaigned for expulsions of undocumented immigrants, for forcing teachers and medical professionals to act like INS agents, and called for ID cards for all citizens. Congressional aides are already counting potential votes for a new Constitution amendment that would impose state-sponsored prayer in the schools.

New Gingrich claims to be "pro-family" and anti-government" while he proposes breaking up poor welfare families and delivering the kids to a new network of government orphanages.

How typical it is for boozewah American politics to rush toward a police state flying banners that read "Less Government, More Freedom!"

Turning Middle Class Discontent Into a Mandate for Outbacks

The Republican rhetoric of "less government" and "radical change" is an attempt to channel widespread middle class discontent for ruling class purposes.

There is much anger in the United States aimed at the government. This mood reaches far beyond the oppressed and progressive forces. It has gripped quite conservative, patriotic, and even privileged sections of the people.

The workings of the system have undermined the stability and wealth of millions of middle class people—and there is a widespread fear that the future will be even worse. People believe that the next generation will have trouble getting the basics of U.S.-style middle class life: college education, stable careers, home ownership. Most people fear that many of the entitlements they expect to use—like social security, Medicare, college loans—will not be there when they need them. In general, wide sections of the middle classes think they are being ripped off and that something has to be done about it.

Both the Republicans and the Clinton "New Democrats" have fanned the idea that the broad middle classes are suffering because too much of society's resources are going toward the poor. In the mean-spirited politics of 1994, a section of middle class voters were told that they should preserve their privileges and status by supporting major attacks on the poor. But the truth is that they are being sucked dry. At least half of U.S. families now get some kind of government subsidy, and the ruling class has no intention to stop after cutting the programs for the poor. The ruling class has been quietly counting all kinds of "entitlement" programs that will be slashed to pay for the trillion-dollar debts—including those programs the middle classes rely on, like farm subsidies, social security, Medicare, and student loans.

In other words, the "anti-government" rhetoric of the Republicans is a codeword for cutting all government expenditures and regulations that in any way benefit the masses of people. Like the earlier conservative slogan "states rights," "less government...

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South Central L.A.:
People's Doctor Declares

A number of doctors in South Central Los Angeles are taking a public stand against the anti-immigrant Prop 187 law. At a press conference the day after the passage of Prop 187 in the California election, the doctors publicly declared their refusal to go along with the law's requirement to identify and report undocumented immigrants to the government. The press conference was held in front of a medical clinic in South Central and was attended by several local TV stations.

The RW recently spoke with Dr. James Mays, a Black physician who is one of the organizers of this protest. Dr. Mays talked about the impact of Prop 187 on health care for immigrants and his reasons for opposing the new law.

Dr. Mays owns three clinics in or near South Central Los Angeles. His clinics serve poor Black and Latino people in the area. On South Broadway just west of Watts, there are few services of any kind available to the people; his clinic and another medical office next door are two of the only businesses open on the block. Despite a waiting room full of patients, he agreed to sit down on the spot for an interview.

Dr. Mays voted against 187, and he explained why he feels so strongly about opposing the war on immigrants: "The reason I voted against 187 is because of the restrictions that 187 places on people and that relates to the medical aspect. As a doctor I cannot be a part of any situation in which I prohibit treatment for anyone, regardless of who they are. I served in Vietnam, and I treated American soldiers. I went out into the villages after we had bombed the villages, and I treated the village people, and some of them were Vietcong. So as a physician, with my Hippocratic oath and with my personal moral feeling, I cannot not treat people."

Various judges have issued temporary orders putting off some of the provisions of 187 that relate to health care and education. But the measure has already begun to push immigrants into the shadows. Many immigrants are taking steps to protect themselves, skipping appointments in clinics and other places where they might be asked to produce ID documents. Dr. Mays has seen these effects in his own clinics and knows the impact is being felt broadly. And he has rallied other doctors in the area to take a stand: "All of the doctors around here are [supporting my position]. I contacted them. The chiropractor next door participated in the press conference. He came out and committed himself. I spread the word to every doctor along here to accept Hispanic patients, and they're going to do it."

He has also reached out to bring the community in: "The first three or four days, there was a drop-off. But what we did was, one of the Hispanic medical workers helped make flyers [saying 'Hispanics Accepted'] in English and Spanish, and we've been passing them out all over the community. In fact, we're getting ready to get a big sign to put on the front of every clinic, to let them know that they are welcome, that we are accepting Hispanic patients."

"In a community practice, versus a clinic or a hospital, word of mouth is more important than anything else. There's an interesting admixture of cooperation in this type of community. Blacks talk to Hispanics. They find some way to communicate and say, 'Well, you go to Dr. Mays' office, you're going to be accepted, period. There's no prejudice in there because we're all kind of struggling along together.' So for the first two or three days, I think because of the fear, it did drop off, but it's picking back up right now."

Dr. Mays has a private practice, but his patients are poor. Many are on Medi-Cal, and face being cut off if they can't show the right papers. Under the provisions of 187, doctors and other health and social service workers would also face arrest for failing to turn "suspected" undocumented people over to the authorities. "If that law becomes a fixture, I have a contract with Medi-Cal, and I say I can't treat these people—and that's ridiculous."

California Governor Wilson's first move after the election was to direct public health agencies to deny prenatal care and long-term health care to anyone who couldn't prove they were "legal." This action outraged Dr. Mays, who said it was "about the most inhumane thing you can do. It's diabolical."
Non-Compliance with Prop 187

And he spoke about the impact that Prop 187 could have on a community whose health situation is already precarious: "I'm basically concerned with those preventive measures that we were trying to install, that we weren't successful in doing, like immunizations for the children. They're going to drift back to the schools, and they're going to spread infectious diseases among the other children—the so-called citizens, many of whom are not immunized. We're in a very difficult situation, and we've had outbreaks of dysentery when we had a measles epidemic. We have a skin infection, ringworm, that's taking place right now."

"At the state of medicine right now as it relates to the general population—particularly the indigent, the homeless and the undocumented—we're not up to staff. So what I advocated was: 'Not only do we just accept them, I think we should go out and look for them.' We should go out and find the people and treat them preventively. Because what's going to happen is, they're going to end up in the emergency room, which is under the governor's accepted treatment plan, and you're going to spend much more money."

Aside from the denial of medical care, Dr. Mays also opposes other aspects of the war on immigrants. He spoke about the proposal from officials at various levels of government for a "national identification card." This is being put forward as an anti-immigrant measure, and it would mean a South Africa-style passbook for everybody. "Eventually, what's going to happen, because of the turmoil in Compton or whatever, you've gonna have identification that restricts you to a certain community."

You might just be restricted to Compton, ... If you allow certain things to take place, if you allow your freedoms to be slowly taken away, or allow somebody else's freedom to be taken away—not particularly lawful freedoms, but god-given rights to better yourself—then you're slowly losing your own freedom. Eventually, there might be a particular identification for certain women or for gays or whatever. You can't allow freedoms to be lost.

The war on immigrants has been opposed by people of different nationalities and social classes, including many physicians. It is especially important that Black people are speaking out against it, since the system tries to pit Black and Latino people against each other, fighting for the bottom rung on the ladder. When asked about this question, Dr. Mays referred to a recent incident in Compton, a small city just south of Watts: "Remember when that big, bratty police officer beat on this Mexican lad? The Black civil rights leaders said, 'We're against police brutality.' What has occurred is that, because there's a commonality of 'enemy'—the system, represented by the police—they united, and that was a very positive gesture. Rather than the Hispanics saying, 'Well, we have a war against the Blacks because it's a Black police officer,' the police officer became the focus of attention, regardless of what color he was."

"(Black people) have to identify with the Hispanics. It is not the fault of the South Americans to come to the United States—with all the television showing all this 'havens,' and they're living in poverty, and all you have to do is avoid a few border guards, and slip across. The people themselves are trying to improve themselves, the same way Blacks did when they migrated from Mississippi to Chicago or Detroit seeking a better life."

"Dr. Mays notes the frustrations among the Black people who are constantly told by the system, that Latinos, immigrants have "stolen their jobs." Dr. Mays pointed out that people can't just look at things within the borders of the U.S., "(The U.S.) has a trade surplus with Mexico, which means jobs for Americans.... But we identify a group of people as Blacks who were identified at one time—stereotyped as 'these Mexicans' or 'these Blacks' or whatever. When we do that, I think we let prejudice overbroaden our frustrations, which I think 187 has done."

"The fight is not over," Dr. Mays said. "I think the proponents of 187 knew they would have trouble legally, but this gives momentum to a conservative trend. That's what we have to watch." Like many people right now, in the wake of Prop 187's passage, Dr. Mays is churning over different solutions. He spoke of writing to Congress and other means for reform. But his strong stand of non-compliance with Prop 187 shows that his heart is right with the people.

The mass movement that has arisen in opposition to Prop 187 and the war on immigrants—and the L.A. Rebellion of 1992—gives Dr. Mays a vision of the struggle jumping off to a whole new level: "Particularly in L.A., you have a volatile population... I'm not trying to be an alarmist or anything, but they're going to burn it down. What's going to occur in this—the Hispanics are the molten lava in the depths of the volcano. Wait till this summer, wait till something else happens, like a cop shoots a Hispanic. It's going to explode. You had a billion dollars of damage caused by the riots, and the Farm Bureau showed that the majority of the participants were South Americans, not African Americans. They were walking along together doing it."

Correction

Last week's article, "Students and Truckers Take to the Streets," which was part of the coverage of the protests against Prop 187, mentioned a concert on October 22 that opposed Prop 187 and raised money for the Leonard Peltier Defense Fund and the UFW. The concert actually took place on October 27, not October 22. The concert was organized by César Chávez, not only Chicano musicians but also performers of various nationalities, which was a very positive and important development.
I ain't mean shit, I ain't heard nothin' I don't know what happened, I don't speak pig latin.

I'm a motherfucker true when it's us against you
So fuck Starkey, Hunter and Inspector Clueless.

I had no idea why I was even on the block at all.

Shit I try not to even ask em for directions.

You're in the wrong section of the hood
For a crime to be inspected
Get this black infected, you could get jettiaged.

Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies
You know the deal the real criminals be dressed in suit and ties
Who holds the wealth, you do me damage that help
So fuh me and my folks we finna just do fuh stuff.

For all the tuttle talkers and under cover devils
Their heads were placed in helicopter propellers
And a man had been matched up by the seat of his pants
And his face was driven into a hill of army ants
A man had been murdered for his hand and his feet
I never saw the assailant, I existed in the mist.

(Police voices)

You know the faces and names, all your stories are polluted
Tell me the truth before you have you electrocuted

Attempting on my person wouldn't be the wise thing
In your thoughts you have fears of my people's uprising.

The masses rebel, your aircraft propel,
"Tell me the truth before I have you electrocuted
You know the hees and names, all your stories are polluted".....

"You know the hees and names, all your stories are polluted"...

RW: Why did you all become rappers—what moved you to do that?

Boots: Well, rapping as far as actually doing it is a cultural thing that a lot of people get into without even deciding to.

Pam: I just always loved music as a DJ.

I was raised with it, my dad used to sing with his brothers and stuff.

And then every time there was a party I was always the first to stand next to the DJ and say, "Lay it down, man."

So I just knew what was happening. It was how I got into it, as far as DJing.

I do all the cuts, and all the scratching, all that noise you hear, that's me.

RW: One thing that stands out about your music is that you go after this whole dog-eat-dog mentality that the power structure feeds us and all the conditions that lead people into the gangsta logic. But what I really like is that at the end of the day, it’s not the people that you blame—you target the system.

Boots: We try not to preach to or talk at people—because it’s where we’ve come from too, the ideas that we're talking about are stuff that we've had in the past too, so you can't just say, "This is wrong." and "the way you’re doing this is wrong." We show what’s going on and the reason why it’s happening and put it in street language, to where we try to make people see, "damm, that's a dumb way to think, if you look at it that way that.

RW: In this new album, you tell stories through these characters, positive and negative characters, like the Dave Rockefellers, the small-time hustlers, and the woman looking at the young boy who’s looking out the project window...

Genocide and Juice, you put forward a sharp attitude on how to deal with the cops, the enforcers of the rich.

E-Rock: Yeah, they fuck with you all the time.

And when we drove to DC and back, and you know how many times we got pulled over there.

And they was asking stupid questions, like where you going, where you from, you like that.

And they was telling you to get the shoes from.

Stupid shit.

Boots: It was like an interrogation.

E-Rock: It’s just like in Oakland—they just bust on you. So in that song we’re like, "just leave us the fuck alone".

Boots: It’s the whole idea of killing somebody who’s killing all these people be the judge over them.

There’s people in the community who do things wrong to each other.

But on the whole we lose out with the police.

And what we’re saying—we’re not saying nothing should be done—we’re saying that the community has to check itself and that the government, in this case through the police, is not going to help.

And it’s about making help to the community.

And if you’re just using{textil}

that it’s an intro to terrordise everybody.

That’s basically our stance and it already is the stance—when the police comes around and do snitching, that’s the enemy—whether they’re involved in any kind of movement or not.

E-Rock: They ain’t there to protect you. They’re there to get on you in check... So I don’t talk to em. I’d rather take in my own hands than turn to them.

RW: One of the things I really like about your music is that you take on some heavy ideological questions. Like in the last album, Kill My Landlord, a character in one of your songs is accused of something which was done by another guy, some small-time hustler. The character decides he’s not gonna drop a dime on the guy because the system has no right to judge them anyway.

So you’re real tough on this whole snitching to the enemy even it means going to jail.

Boots: That was just a train of thought—we was talking about the way a lot of people act on an everyday basis, this is what you would think in this situation, just to make it more real... And we put in the decisions that we would make, and the reasons why we make those decisions.

RW: In the song "Kill My Landlord" you’ve got this line: “I learned the game and I became a revolutionary—try to communicate; the masses are a loaded gun." Can you talk about how you see your art as part of building for revolution?

Boots: It’s basically creating a culture that’s making it fertile for a movement to happen. In order to change anything, in expressing anything, in relating to any sort of movement. I don’t think it’s a power in and of itself. I think that a movement that has some short-term material as well as long-term-material goals is important and so our place in there is part of "creating that culture" movement can grow—a rather loose-knit movement.

We could make a song just with some tight beats and "revolution, revolution, revolution." [laughs] But it wouldn’t stick, people wouldn’t really change anybody’s way of thinking or nothing like that.

So our job is to relate to people and make little little connections, logic, decisions, these little things that lead people to want to be involved in a movement.
Women are not encouraged to take roles that are considered appropriate for a woman who has a child and stuff, because they're more than just an object. They're also a big part of the show. They're an actual physical strength. It's a choice—what do you say the lyrics are right to the point?—what do you do in a song—what are you saying?—what do you do about the information that we have... I don't think our music is gonna make someone change his mind about something, but I think what it does is let them realize, give them a picture that you draw in the song that's going on, so that would be able to give them the inspiration to talk about it too. They feel that they can get somewhere with it.

Pam: You'd be surprised how many people actually listen and know what we're saying in the song—breaking it down.

Boots: Anywhere our record was known we could go into some of the neighborhoods where people would say, "Oh, you shouldn't go there, you're not from there." And we would go there and people would come up, "Oh, what's up, you're cool?"—in cities all over the country. People know where we're coming from and they like that and they already felt like, "I know who you are," so they accept us. Like you know sometimes we will see somebody that's rolling, like a small-time dope dealer, and they'll get out of the car and say, "I love what you all are saying." It's kinda crazy, but you know we don't just have crowds of people that wanna hear some positive music. We have lots of people who really don't care what they listen to, usually, but they like us for what we're saying. A lot of what people get caught up in—when they do music that has a message, they do it for those people who want to hear that message. And we do it for people that really just want to hear something else. Cuz I think that's—just be influencing the same people!

People do what they think is right and what they think is right is only based on what they know. We give them other information, we tell them the conclusion too, that would come from the information that we have... I don't think our music is gonna make somebody change their minds about something, but I think what it does is let people think about it and open the way for anything else to come into their life, the other ideas, in another form, to come into their lives, to change them or whatever. And hopefully, at the same time, for people who already consider themselves revolutionaries it can be—feel like a theme song or something, you know what I'm saying?
Report from Chiapas: Campesinos with Guns

Part 6: Zapatista Territory

by Michael Slate

On the Trail of the Uprising

It rained sometime around dawn, and at 7 a.m. a gray mist still hung over the mountains that lined the horizon. Early morning was the busiest time down at the market in Ocosingo. Mounds of fruits and vegetables of every type and color imaginable filled the concrete vendor stalls. Indigenous peasants jammed the aisles of the market, buying and selling supplies and goods. One old woman from an outlying village arrived at the market with a few live turkeys hanging upside down and slung over her shoulder. A small trickle of blood ran down her skin from the turkeys constantly pecking at her leg as she walked.

It was just before the Easter holidays, so the market was especially busy. Hundreds of bullet holes scarred the walls, the vendor stalls, the tin roof and the steel support beams of the market—the only sign of the massacre of indigenous peasant rebels by the Mexican army during the January uprising led by the EZLN, the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional. Across the street from the market, Mexican army troops leaned against the sandbag walls of one of their rooftop machine gun nests and tensely watched the crowds in the market and the surrounding streets.

Empty cargo and livestock trucks with large metal skeleton frames on the back—like the monkey bars in urban playgrounds—were parked up and down the streets bordering the market. The drivers were eating, talking with their friends, or trying to catch some sleep before making the long trip home. The trucks from some of the more remote villages had already travelled five to eight hours and were scheduled to do a return trip later in the afternoon. These trucks were the main form of transportation for the indigenous campesinos going back and forth from the countryside.

We were headed out to a town in the territory controlled by the EZLN—known as the Zapatistas. We found a truck headed in our direction and climbed up on the back. It was loaded down with food and other supplies and about twenty indigenous campesinos and campesinas all headed deep into the hills and forests beyond Ocosingo.

At the edge of the city the Mexican army stopped our truck at a roadblock. The roadblock was only a small part of a huge army encampment. Heavily armed soldiers—dug in deep on both sides of the road—kept their guns ready for anything. Tanks and artillery sat out in the middle of a field, only partially hidden by camouflage netting. The soldiers ordered all of us off of the truck. And while one group of soldiers checked everyone's papers, another searched the truck and the supplies for gasoline or other items that local peasants might be smuggling out to the Zapatistas.

Federal Judicial police sat on a hillside, watching the roadblock, and the sound of gunfire from an army position just over the hill cracked the intense silence at the roadblock.

A couple of kilometers past the roadblock our truck turned off the paved highway and onto the narrow and rutted dirt road that ran out to EZLN territory. There was nothing but pasture and woods lining the road for miles. Huge parcels of land were marked as government or army territory while other huge pastures were marked off as the property of a rancher or landowner. Handpainted signs along the road pointed out the locations of local water wells. Small clusters of mud huts sprang up unexpectedly and every now and then the truck stopped to let off or pick up passengers.

As the truck geared down to a slower crawl and pulled over to park, a column of men suddenly came down out of the woods, loaded up huge bundles to hang from the straps around their foreheads, my thoughts raced back to what had happened out here during the New Year's Rebellion and the days that followed. The EZLN organized and led thousands of indigenous peasants from the villages and ejidos out here and in other parts of the highlands in an uprising that stunned Mexico and focused all eyes on the campesinos and the issue of armed revolution. The peasant rebels slipped through the night and, armed with old and small weapons—including knives, rocks and traditional weapons—took over four county seats in the Chiapas highlands. The Zapatistas also sharply contested with the Mexican government troops.
for control of three other smaller towns. They attacked government buildings and destroyed financial and criminal records—temporarily removing a major source of suffering for the indigenous communities. They sacked government offices and state-run stores, turning supplies and equipment over to the people in the towns. They attacked prisons—totally destroying the local jail in San Cristobal—and freed the prisoners. They fought the army in Ocosingo and at Rancho Nuevo—the largest military outpost in southern Mexico.

All throughout the highlands, big landowners and arrogant cacique political bosses fled in terror as campesinos inspired by the uprising seized land and fought back against their oppression. On the eve of the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—which would bring new levels of exploitation to the Mexican countryside—the indigenous peasants of Chiapas issued a hard slap in the face to imperialism.

The uprising was brief. The rebels were on the offensive for only a few days. The Mexican government hit back hard. Over a hundred people were killed, with some estimating the casualties at over 400 dead. Hundreds were arrested throughout the highlands and many were tortured. The Mexican army rampaged through indigenous villages and towns. U.S.-supplied helicopters and Swiss airplanes were used to strafe and bomb the indigenous peasant communities. U.S. soldiers and arrogant cacique political bosses fled in terror as campesinos inspired by the uprising seized land and fought back against their oppression.

By January 7 all of the cities captured by the Zapatistas were back in the hands of Chiapas and especially in the areas close to the EZLN base. There were reports of government troops moving in the areas around Ocoingo and Las Margaritas, and the EZLN reported that the government was setting up and getting ready to close a pincer around the EZLN territory. Military planes made constant flyovers of the territory behind the Zapatista lines, and one area near the town of Alvaro Obregón reported that a military plane had dropped a bomb on an ejido sympathetic to the EZLN. The “peace process” was temporarily suspended. The EZLN put all of its troops and territory on red alert, and the situation was still very tense as we made our way into Zapatista territory.

It was blistering hot as we paused on a hill where a small dirt road breaks off from the main dirt road and headed up a hill toward one of the EZLN roadblocks guarding the entry points into their territory. A few baby pigs thrashed about in the underbrush. Two riderless horses galloped up a hill towards a town controlled by the Zapatistas. A local youth was waiting for a cargo truck headed back into Ocosingo. As he talked to us about the January rebellion, the young campesino scanned the horizon—hoping that one last truck would come so he could see his girlfriend. He reached down in the dirt and picked up an empty bullet casing. He tossed it over to me and explained that it was from a major battle between the Mexican army and the EZLN right at that spot in the road.

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It was blistering hot as we paused on a hill where a small dirt road broke off from the main dirt road and headed up a hill toward one of the EZLN roadblocks guarding the entry points into their territory. A few baby pigs thrashed about in the underbrush. Two riderless horses galloped up a hill towards a town controlled by the Zapatistas. A local youth was waiting for a cargo truck headed back into Ocosingo. As he talked to us about the January rebellion, the young campesino scanned the horizon—hoping that one last truck would come so he could see his girlfriend. He reached down in the dirt and picked up an empty bullet casing. He tossed it over to me and explained that it was from a major battle between the Mexican army and the EZLN right at that spot in the road.

At first we were all scared here. I mean, they were not letting anybody in or out during those times. We didn’t know what was going on. There was a 40-minute fight right here in January. They shot at each other a lot—the Mexican army and the Zapatistas. The Mexican army came up here and the Zapatistas attacked them and forced them back.

"We were scared. But up there, everybody supported the Zapatistas. And when they published their demands, when they said what their demands were, then we weren’t afraid of them. Their demands were the demands of the peasants. They listed the needs of the peasants.

"They always say on television and the radio that Chiapas is the poorest place in the country. They say Chiapas has been abandoned. The government gives us no help. They always come around and promise everything—especially in election years...But still we have nothing and some are very rich and have lots of land. That’s why the struggle happened. The Zapatistas began a struggle. It is a process, the struggle is a process and it is good that it happened. But it is not over yet and nobody knows how it will end."
For a long time really, people have been conoete poles laying alongside the dirt oected and sane wires strung out between the Solidarity (the main government poverty program) painted on the backboards of the Zapatista strategy and the Maoist path of the people. Though Iknew that there them. So far the only sign of the govern took more than a day for the bucket to fill. The tiny town was one of the poorest I had seen in Chiapas. It was almost entirely mud and stick huts—no electricity and a bucket was bung over tibe faucet to catch each drop. We were told that it often happens that they settled on the hills. They only gave us the land that is here on the hills. What can you grow on a hillside? Nothing. Things don't grow.

Jaime was a civilian representative of the Zapotistas and he was giving us an overall orientation on the situation in his town and among the people. Though I knew that there were many differences between the Zapotista strategy and the Maoist path of the New Democratic Revolution and the组织 advocated working with the government to resolve the suffering in the countryside and really had not functioned in this town for a while. Many of the former members of this organization were now supporters and members of the EZLN. "It's not that people don't work the land," Jaime explained. "You can work the land, but it just doesn't produce. The plowing is done seasonally. The hills are rocky and people dangle on the slopes. So there's not enough for people to consume. It is not good land. It is still poor people who live and farm in the hills. There are no rich people on the hills. The rich people live in the flat lands and near the rivers. They can grow food and live good here. Here we don't even have water. Most of the time we have to go to the river. It's 4 km from here. There was a small stream closer but it is dried up now.

"So people have been here a long time. Since the time of our ancestors, many people have died suffering. It's not a good life for the poor. They don't have enough to eat, they don't have what they need to benefit the family, there's not enough. "Our children get no education here. The teachers that were here before have not come back since January. There have never been any doctors here. When people get sick we have to take them to the hospital in the city. But it is very hard to get sick people to any hospital. You've seen how the road is—full of holes and when it rains it is even worse. Before, the road was here we had to carry our sick people to the hospitals in the city.

It was a story we had heard over and over in our conversations with the peasants in our travels in Chiapas. I asked Jaime about the fincas and big landowners in the area. He pointed to a barbed wire fence—afinca of more than 4000 hectares.

Jaime told us that the town was founded by their relatives who left the finca to establish an estate in the days after the Mexican Revolution. "Our ancestors, our grandfathers, died on those fincas. Everyone here used to be a peon. When our people left the finca to settle these lands the ranchers sent people to attack them. They sent people to bring us back to work the finca or to kill us. Before, in the time of our ancestors, people made 8 cents, 25 cents. Now it's just 5 to 7 pesos, working from dawn to dust. So people feel that.

"The work is very difficult. In the city, people don't really know what it's like. Working the fields is very hard work. You work the cornfields, and when you don't have work, people go out to sell their labor. But there you get paid after a period of two or three months. Even though you need things right away, they don't pay you. You feel bad about it but for a long time it's been like that. And not just here. All over Chiapas it's like that. So people feel that.

"Many people go to the city to look for work, but in those jobs they give you twice the work. You have to work extra hours and it's hard work. Many people here in this area can't speak Spanish. So many of us can't even go to the cities because we can't
Peasants blockade a road in Chiapas.

Po, die main newspaper in San Cristóbal, indigenous villages of the Lacandón Forest—organize."

According to Marcos, the EZLN began with large groups of urban and rural young radicals moving out to the rural mountain areas to live among and organize the indigenous people ten years earlier. Marcos said that these early radicals were influenced by and learned from the heroes denied that the EZLN is a vanguard leadership of the revolutionary struggle in Mexico. Instead, he has spoken about how the Zapatistas being a facilitator for the birth of a new society based on participatory democracy.

This emphasis on criticizing political vacuous ideological political properties of Chi, Guerrea, and it has won the EZLN much sympathy among the middle classes of Mexico—who take some comfort in the fact that EZLN does not claim to be a proletarian vanguard. It has found the road to the EZLN, and more broadly among their supporters, there is a widening of views on all of the key questions of the day.

Raul, another civilian representative of the Zapatistas, jumped into the discussion. Raul had a lot of experiences with the repression brought down on the indigenous peoples by the Mexican government. Raul counted this as high among the conditions leading up to the rebellion, and widespread support for the uprising throughout the area.

Raul told us that the Mexican army was especially brutal in this area in the days after the uprising. Repeated bombing and strafing of the village and villages was aimed at driving the Zapatistas and their supporters out of the area. And the army had actually marched within a few kilometers of the village where the local residents...and especially what he and other Zapatistas saw in the one-party dictatorship of the PRI, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which has run the government for more than 65 years. While there was over-explaining support for the January uprising and the armed struggle in general, there was a lot of informal debate in the ranks of the EZLN...and among their supporters over how exactly this dictatorship can be changed.

Most of the people we spoke with saw the need for waging an armed struggle, but this wasn’t the same as supporting for a protracted People’s War and a New Democratic Revolution.

Although Raul enthusiastically upheld the peasant rebellion, he did not see the armed struggle as part of a struggle for national power. He viewed the armed struggle as both a last resort and a hammer to hold over the head of the regime in order to force it to listen to and respond to the needs of the people. And even if the armed struggle didn’t bring about a total change, Raul thought that it might at least bring about a situation where the peasant could get some partial benefits. We spoke for a while about how he saw ending the oppression of the people.

I think that for a long time we’ve been talking with the government, with commissions, acting authoritatively, and we’ve never gotten a solution. That’s why now we as peasants think that we need to struggle. With the legal road, they didn’t pay any attention to us, and if we don’t do it in this way, the government is going to finish us off. That’s why we began this struggle.”

“We did it through their legal road. We didn’t talk about their problems. We went through the legal road first. Twenty years, right there. Struggling, and struggling, and they told us, ‘You, stick such and such day, much and much such month,’ and nothing happened. You can see right here in this community. There is what? There’s nothing here from the government. No schools, no electricity. The school that’s here, people put themselves up with their own money from the ejidos. What do you see? There’s nothing there.

There’s no other way, only taking up weapons. Many people would rather die in war than in misery. The fighting. We know that we’re going to die in the end. That’s how it is, everybody is going to die one day anyway. So we can’t just stay on with our thoughts.

There was a dialogue with the government. But it’s just promises. We’ll have to see if they fulfill them. Before the dialogue happened, people thought that they would fight them all the way. We’ll have to see if they give everything that they promised. Things like that aren’t really changing in the community. Some proposals have been made. But in terms of change, not yet. It hasn’t been confirmed yet. The government, the Commissar, promised that these things could be done, but who knows? If it’s true, things begin to change, but if they don’t, well, they don’t.”

Read, like most of the people we spoke with in this area, hated the Mexican government...
**East Timor Protests Break the Silence**

In the last issue of the RW, we reported on the hidden history of East Timor—the brutal 19-year occupation by the U.S.-backed Indonesian regime which has killed hundreds of thousands of Timorese people. As we pointed out, U.S. President Clinton went to Indonesia on November 15-16 for the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation conference and shook hands with the butcher Suharto—while trying to downplay the bloody nature of his fascist regime. But the plans of Suharto and his U.S. godfathers to “focus on economic issues” were rudely and rightly disrupted by the oppressed Timorese people and their supporters around the world. Their actions were a strong blow against the U.S. government’s complicit silence and hypocrisy on East Timor.

Early Saturday morning, November 12, a number of Timorese students and workers living in Indonesia converged on the U.S. embassy in Jakarta. The embassy action was also a bitter blow for the fascist Indonesian regime, which has supplied the Indonesian regime with weapons. And Christopher refused the demand of the Timorese protesters that he and Clinton meet with them.

The Timorese had climbed into the embassy compound and staged a demonstration inside the embassy parking lot, unfurling banners and shouting slogans for independence. The embassy action was also a bitter blow for the fascist Indonesian regime, which had brought 17,000 extra police to Jakarta in order to suppress any protests. The mainstream U.S. media was forced to give more “autonomy” to the Timorese and was killed during the argument that broke out.

The massacre of the Timorese at the hands of the Indonesian occupation has been a major event in the history of the struggle for East Timor. Despite the claims by the Indonesian government that they plan on getting to East Timor, it is feared they have been “disappeared” by the fascist Indonesian regime.

The occupation of the embassy was professionally embarrassing for both the Indonesian regime and the U.S. It has raped a gaping hole in the U.S. government’s supposed “concern for human rights.” One news report said it “overshadowed” the Asia-Pacific trade summit. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was forced to express his “sympathy” for the Timorese.

This was crude hypocrisy, coming from a top representative of a government which has supplied the Indonesian regime with hundreds of millions of dollars in military weapons. And Christopher refused the demand of the Timorese protesters that he and Clinton meet with them.

The embassy compound was not given any food or water or even allowed to use the bathroom until late Sunday. As we go to press, they are still in the parking lot of the embassy. Meanwhile, hundreds of Indonesian troops have surrounded the embassy, preventing anyone from talking with the Timorese.

The embassy action was also a bitter blow for the fascist Indonesian regime, which had brought 17,000 extra police to Jakarta in order to suppress any protests. One mainstream news report summed up, “The protests appear to have wrecked the facade of a modern and economically successful image to world leaders.”

At the same time as the occupation of the embassy, students in East Timor held a pro-independence demonstration and memorial service. This action marked the third anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre, when Indonesian soldiers opened fire on unarmed students and demonstrators and massacred hundreds of Timorese. Only a few months ago, another pro-independence demonstration was brutally put down by Indonesian troops who killed two Timorese.

Last week’s demonstration went without incident. But shortly afterward, an Indonesian killed a Timorese in an argument in the central market in the capital city, Dili. The Indonesian responsible was one of 150,000 that have been moved to East Timor and have taken over the economy. The Timorese had objected to being kicked out of their market space by the Indonesian and was killed during the argument that broke out.

The massacre of the Timorese at the hands of the Indonesian occupation—and the youth of East Timor responding in dramatic fashion. Over 1,000 took to the streets, attacking property owned by Indonesians, burning cars and stores, throwing rocks and bottles and hurling tear gas back at the Indonesian riot police. There are reports that one or two Timorese were killed and that further clashes took place the next day. This major upsurge marks a significant growth in the militancy of the Timorese youth, and is further proof that the U.S. and Indonesian governments have been far from successful in breaking the determination of the Timorese people.

Supporters of the Timorese around the world also took action. In Washington and San Francisco, supporters occupied parts of the Indonesian consulate in solidarity with the Timorese in Jakarta. There were numerous arrests and confrontations with Indonesian and U.S. State Department officials. Others demonstrated throughout the U.S. and the rest of the world.

In addition, two progressive U.S. journalists who had nearly been killed at the Santa Cruz massacre in 1991 were arrested this month when they attempted to reconquer East Timor. Despite the claims by the Indonesian regime that the territory is “open” to all visitors, the journalists were taken to an army base and held for a day before being released in Jakarta. The journalists have announced that they plan on going to East Timor one way or another.

The protests by the Timorese people presented Clinton and the U.S. ruling class from being able to completely ignore the East Timor issue at the APEC conference. The mainstream U.S. media was forced to give some coverage to the embassy protest and the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. And U.S. officials announced that in a private meeting with Suharto, Clinton urged him to “respect human rights” and give more “autonomy” to the Timorese. But such words cannot hide the bloody hands of the U.S. backers of the Indonesian regime. Even William Kristol object about “human rights,” his cabinet officials were announcing $40 billion in economic deals with the criminal Indonesian rulers.

This action of the Timorese youth broke the silence that the oppression had imposed on the truth about East Timor—and exposed the hypocrisy of the U.S. government’s talk of “human rights.” People around the world witnessed the courage and determination of the oppressed Timorese people, undiminished after 19 years of genocidal occupation. As one Timorese in the embassy put it, “If we come this far, so why should we give in now?”

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**Timorese students occupy the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta.**

Indonesian troops in Dili, East Timor.
Coming Next Week

**RW Interview With Mumia Abu-Jamal**

Beginning next week: A two-part interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal from the state prison in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. A Black Panther at age 16, an award-winning radio journalist censored by National Public Radio, and the only political prisoner in the U.S. currently facing execution, Mumia tells his story.

In this exclusive interview conducted by the Revolutionary Worker, Mumia talks about how his eyes were opened to oppression, how the Black Panther Party was formed in Philadelphia, censorship in the bourgeois media, the importance of the revolutionary press, the nature of the judicial system, the potential of today’s revolutionary youth, and more!

The following is an excerpt from this interview:

**RW:** This December will be the 35th anniversary of your incarceration and the 25th anniversary of the police assassination of Fred Hampton, Chairman of the Black Panther Party in Illinois. A lot of people now see the “informal executions” of the ’60s turning into the formal executions of the ’90s. What is your message to those organizing to stop the legal lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal?

*Mumia:* My thanks to them, first of all, for their good and radical work. Second of all, don’t give up the fight. I continue to write. I continue to resist. I continue to speak truth to power. I continue to rebel against the system that tried to kill me 13 years ago, and continues to try to kill me today. I know that for some people 13 years ago, depending on your age of course, is an eternity ago. For others it seems just like yesterday.

What should be clear to everyone, no matter what your perspective, is what happened about a year ago, the NPR flap, should make it very clear to anyone that this government that tried to kill me in December of 1981 still wants me silent and dead today. So the struggle continues. The fight continues. As Fred Hampton would say, “The beat goes on.”

Recently, National Public Radio refused to air a series of commentaries by Mumia after they had been taped. And the fight to prevent the execution of Mumia has become even more urgent with the election to office of a viciously pro-death penalty governor and legislators in Pennsylvania (and elsewhere in the U.S.)

A call for Nationwide Campus Programs December 4-9 put out by Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Refuse & Resist, and Equal Justice, U.S.A. said: “We failed to stop the execution of Mumia. In the heightened reactionary climate of the ’90s, the government wants to go through the legal mechanisms of the state what it had previously had to do through gangster-style tactics. If this legal lynching goes down, it will be the first legal execution of a political dissident in the U.S., since the Rosenbergs in 1953.”

We call on readers of the Revolutionary Worker in prison to write statements on what these two anniversaries mean to you. You have looked to Mumia for steadfastness and inspiration, and you need to let others on the outside know about that and how important you feel it is that the people don’t let them kill Mumia!

Many prisoners around the country have recently organized art and cultural events to highlight and support Mumia’s struggle. And some prisoners have already submitted work to the Art and Writing Against the Death Penalty Show. On the occasion of the anniversaries of Fred Hampton’s assassination and Mumia’s arrest, we invite prisoners to send comments/statements to the PRLF and we will forward them to the RW for possible publication.

Send your statements to: PRLF, c/o RCP Publications, P.O. Box 3486, Chicago, IL 60654, or call them in to (312) 227-4066.
Elections 1994

Continued from page 3

"mandate" in this context is also a codeword for opposing federal civil rights regulations. It is a demand that issues of school busing, school curriculum, hiring policies, etc., should be handled in each local area, where religious rightists and racists often feel they have the upper hand.

The new Senate leader Bob Dole explains that "less government" also means "cutting regulations on business." He makes this sound like a plan for "creating jobs by helping small businesses survive"—but in reality it is a way to get the few flimsy legal protections people have—like workplace safety regulations, environmental protection laws, affirmative action in hiring and promotion, and even minimum wage laws.

Much of the middle class discontent and anti-government sentiment has been channeled into reactionary ways—by forces like Perot, Gingrich, and the Christian Right. But that isn't the only thing going on. The political anger and mistrust that the middle classes feel toward the government also represents an opportunity for the revolutionary movement to win potential allies to its cause.

The Phony "New Mandate"

TV commentators talk like this election produced some huge new "mandate" for the extreme Republican right. The facts show a different picture. Only a minority of eligible voters, 37 percent, voted on November 8—millions of them voted for conservative candidates, but the picture is not much different than it has been for a decade.

According to vote analysis (New York Times, November 13) the numerical vote in House races was evenly divided—50 percent to Democrats and 50 percent to Republicans. This is only a small shift in previous voting patterns. For example, in the last "off-year" congressional elections, in 1990, 52 percent of the votes went for Democrats and 48 percent for Republicans. This year there was a shift of about 2 percent of those voting compared to 1990—representing only 0.74 percent of the eligible voters. The system's pollsters say that this shift was mainly among a small section of so-called "Perot independents"—older, conservative, middle class folks who are deeply disgusted with government policy.

While every wiggle of these voter trends is analyzed in the newspapers, the establishment doesn't seem to have released any analysis of the majority who didn't vote. They correctly consider the majority abstention an embarrassment for their system. While millions of immigrant workers were the target of reactionary elections in California—but are completely barred from voting.

In the 1994 congressional elections, less than 20 percent of eligible voters voted for Republicans—and this represented only a small shift in voting patterns. The ruling class has not yet accepted as a special "mandate" for extreme government policies. The extremism that has ensnared official politics has far more to do with the needs of the ruling class than it has to do with "shifts in the electorate."

What the System Has in Store

After the election, the first response of the White House was to announce that Clinton could see "common ground" with the Republican Right. Talk of "universal health care" has evaporated—now the White House agenda focuses on passing tighter immigration controls, new "anti-crime" bills, and extreme welfare cuts. Clinton's advisers say that Clinton will dedicate himself to promoting "family values" in the weeks ahead. NewswEEK (11/21) wrote: "It's clear that Clinton is ready to follow Gingrich on frontstreet, to push his proposals, to respond to social problems by developing a complex system for distributing crumbs and payoffs. The system never delivered on liberal rhetoric of "wiping out poverty and inequality"—but a limited, class folks who are deeply disgusted with social net" was in place, including welfare, social security, medicaid, federal aid to schools etc.

Now these days are gone. While the U.S. ruling class declared themselves the "victors of the Cold War," the truth is that they had driven themselves deep into economic crisis and a debt trillions of dollars. Much of the manufacturing base of the U.S. has decayed into a "rustbelt" while new technology is rapidly transforming where and how production is done. The U.S. ruling class feels intense pressure to drive down the living standards of millions of people to be "competitive" with rivals in the world marketplace. The workings of the capitalist system itself require the ruling class to implement extreme measures on its homefront—whether the chosen rulers are Democrats or Republicans.

Chairman Bob Avakian has said, "There is an ongoing struggle for the development of consciousness characteristic of the middle forces which will be undermined as things come to a head. All this is a good thing—not something to shrink from or be imitated by—but it requires the revolutionary outlook of the proletariat, a radicalization of alliances with other class forces for whom this system fundamentally offers no solutions."

The Need for Organized Struggle and Revolutionary Politics

Some people say, "How can you talk about revolution when the country is picketing rightwingers over moderate and liberal?" We have to start by organizing the rightwingers in the elections, before we can even talk about making radical changes.

This outlook is a serious misunderstanding of the current situation. We certainly need to take on the rightwingers, not just for the sake of doing that, but because it is the right thing to do. We need revolutionary organization to mobilize the masses of people to fight the system. Elections are an arena of the oppressor—and there is no way for the oppressed to build their power or defend their interests there.

What is needed is for the oppressed proletarian people to stop out-taking militant independent action in our class interests and in the interests of all the oppressed. We can take the offensive and fight for the goals of our ruling class enemy. As that happens it will become even more possible to develop alliances with other class forces for whom this system fundamentally offers no solutions.

It is useful to remember that the great high tide of revolutionary struggle in 1968 coincided with Nixon's victory over the Democrats. The fact that Tricky Dick won the White House hardly meant that the ruling class had things under control. In fact, the changes then happening in the political system were part of a growing polarization of politics and society that was overall quite favorable to the revolutionary movement.

Today, there are powerful, restless forces in this country, capable of taking on the oppressor. In the same election that put Gingrich on frontstreet, we witnessed the rapid growth of a new mass movement of resistance to California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187. A song of Mao Tsetung captures this moment: "The enemy is sharpening his sword, we must sharpen ours."
New York: Prisoners Protest Conditions at Rikers Island

As we go to press, Riker's Island Prison in New York City is being rocked by prisoner protests. During the past five weeks, the guards met in press reports, as many as 5,000 out of more than 18,000 prisoners have refused to eat and work for some period of time. The protests are in response to budget cuts and increased brutality by the corrections officers. The guards have been making the conditions for the prisoners even more difficult. The budget cuts have forced the guards to dismiss about 1,000 workers. As we go to press, the guards are planning to shut down the Rikers Island prison. The guards have been putting up their protests outside the prison entrance.

Mayor Giuliani has proposed an additional $31 million in budget cuts. They include cuts in the food and medical care, meanstestiment of GED classes, an increase in the number of social workers to pre-budget cut levels and the transfer of abusive guards who harass prisoners and their visitors. The prisoners say that if their demands are not met by November 30, they plan to extend the protest throughout Riker's. Family members and friends of the prisoners are also planning to build up their protests outside the prison entrance.

In last week's issue, the headline for the article on the Chicago protest against public housing lockdowns and police sweep was not accurate about the number of people involved in the march. As we reported in the article itself, at its height the march included 750 to 1,000 people in the streets. Organizers estimated that more than 2,000 had participated in various forms during the five-mile march around the Robert Taylor Homes.

Correction

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